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A NEW WEASEL FROM NEW MEXICO.

BY C. M. BARBER AND T. D. A. COCKERELL.

Putorius frenatus subsp. *neomexicanus* n. subsp.

Similar to *P. frenatus*, but paler in color; white markings on head more extensive, the white patch between the eyes large, quadrangular, and confluent with the stripes between eye and ear.

Color.—Upper parts, including legs and body from shoulders to tail, entirely of a uniform pale yellowish ochre, a sort of dilute coffee color, but warmer; feet decidedly pallid, but not white. Tail the color of the back, but rather more tinged with reddish, the apical 50 mm. black. Under parts, including breast and throat, uniform light yellowish-ochreous, a tint like that of the back but somewhat paler. Head brownish-black; a large quadrangular creamy-white patch between the eyes, slightly broadest behind, about one-fifth longer than its greatest breadth, narrowly confluent with broad white bands between the eye and ear, which latter extend downward and backward, fading gradually into the ochreous color of the under parts. Face in front of median white patch slightly speckled with whitish. Long bristles of upper lip, some black and some white; a variable amount of white on upper lip; no black behind angles of mouth. Hair of ears brown-black, but white hairs from the lateral bands invade the lower anterior parts, overlapping the aperture. The black of the head fades into brown behind the plane of the ears, and shows here a small whitish mark; the area behind the lower part of the ears is strongly suffused with blackish, contrasting with the yellowish-white immediately below.

Cranial characters.—Compared with Merriam's figure of the skull of *frenatus* (N. A. Weasels, Pl. III, f. 1), the skull of *neomexicanus* is similar, but the frontal region is less narrowed anteriorly and slightly more convex; and the zygomatic processes seem less produced in a lateral direction; the occipital condyles are more produced behind.

Total length of skull 54 mm.; greatest breadth 32; interorbital breadth $14\frac{1}{2}$; foramen magnum to plane of last molars 34 mm.

Measurements (of type specimen in flesh).—Length 500 mm., tail 205, hind feet 50.

Hab.—The Mesilla Valley of New Mexico, near the Rio Grande, alt. about 3,800 ft.

The type specimen was shot in the grass on the shore of Armstrong's Lake, Mesilla, Feb. 1, 1898, by Mr. A. C. Tyson. It is an old male; the teeth are somewhat worn and one or two are gone. It had eaten some small rodent, which from the foot found in the stomach seems to be *Onychomys arcticeps* Rhoads. A second specimen, also a male, was given to us by Mr. C. Barnes, who obtained it from Mr. J. J. Roese. It was killed by a dog in Mesilla Park, and was, unfortunately, much decomposed when it reached our hands. It agrees with the typical specimen, except that the throat is whiter and there is a little more white on the upper lip. Mr. Roese reports that he recently saw four specimens together in a road, early in the morning; this, with the development of the sexual organs, leads us to believe that this (beginning of February and end of January) is the mating season.

A specimen without any history, in alcohol, is in the collection of the New Mexico Agricultural College. It approaches true *frenatus* more than our examples, having a spot behind the angle of the mouth, and the white median patch of the head confluent only on one side with the lateral band. The discovery of *P. frenatus neomexicanus* extends the range of the *frenatus* series many hundreds of miles to the north, and into the Upper Sonoran Zone. One of us, after reading Dr. Merriam's account of the North American weasels, prophesied that there would be a new type found in the Mesilla Valley, and such proves to be the case, the characters of our animal, while surely of no more than subspecific value, being quite distinct.